A background image showing three students in a library setting. A young man with dark hair is smiling and looking towards the right. A young woman with glasses and dark hair is looking at a laptop screen. Another student is partially visible on the right. Bookshelves filled with books are in the background.

3 UNIVERSITIES – 2 CONTINENTS – 1 CLASSROOM: DESIGNING ACCESSIBLE BUSINESS START-UP COMPANIES THROUGH AN ONLINE INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION PROJECT

RITA KORIS
BUDAPEST BUSINESS UNIVERSITY, HUNGARY

Content

7-minute pitch



- Definition and features of Virtual Exchange projects
- Our project aims
- Project outline
- Innovative aspects of the project

Breakout room session



- Project design and timeline
- Benefits and challenges
- Resources and links for finding partners, VE training, research, recognition
- Discussion and exchange of ideas, experience, adaptability

What is Virtual Exchange (VE)?

online collaboration and communication between people (students) during a given period of time enabled by ICT tools

Aims of VE projects:

- Provide the widest possible range of students with **international intercultural experience** as part of formal or informal education
- Strengthen **mutual understanding, global education and digital literacy**
- Develop **employability skills** (e.g. digital competences, language and communication skills, online collaboration skills, ability to work in different cultural contexts, teamwork)

Internationalization at Home (IaH)

Features of Virtual Exchange

- Collaboration between 2 or more institutions, instructors and students
- 4-12 week-long complex projects
- Embedded project activities into university courses
- Included in the course grading and credits
- Use of online technologies
- Learning-by-doing, worklife simulation
- Intercultural communication, intercultural competence
- Skills development
- Teachers in coordinator/facilitator/mentor/advisor roles



Our project aims

Providing international project experience for students

Virtually involving students in collaborative activities

Promoting multidisciplinary awareness and learning

Raising awareness of accessibility in business

Developing students' employability skills

Simulating work in Global Virtual Teams (GVTs)

Simulating workplace communication

Application of theory to practice

Partnering universities

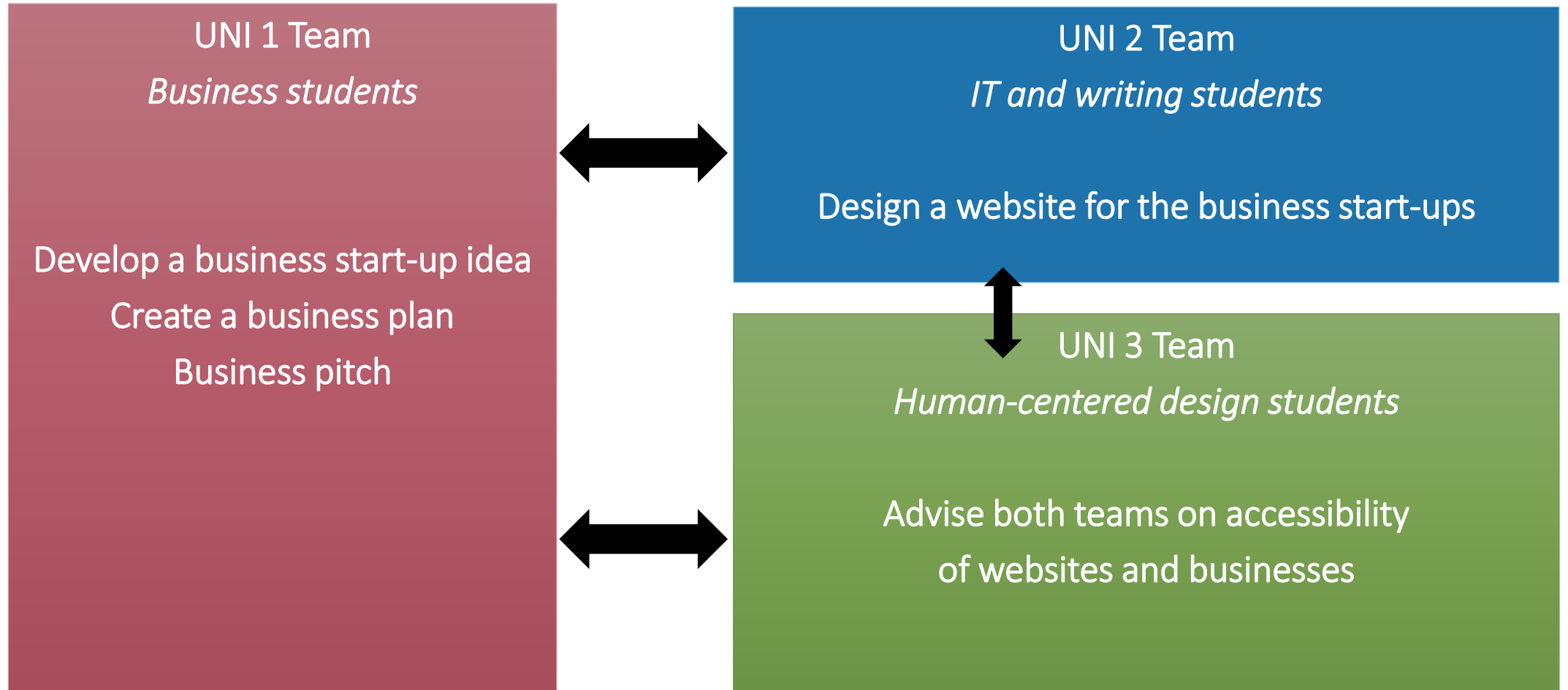


University 3 in Washington, US

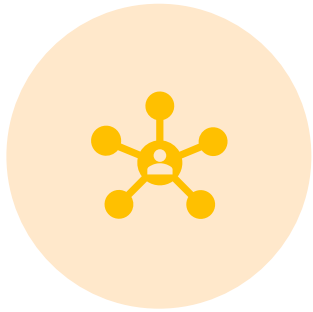
University 2 in Michigan, US

University 1 in Hungary

Project outline



Innovative aspect of the project



MULTI-DISCIPLINARY, PEER-TO-
PEER LEARNING




INTERNATIONAL
COLLABORATION AND CROSS-
CULTURAL COMMUNICATION



THE IMPORTANCE OF
INCLUSIVE BUSINESSES

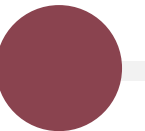


DEVELOPMENT OF
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
INCLUDING DIGITAL LITERACY



Meet you at the
breakout session

End of pitch
Start of breakout room session



Participating student groups

Students at University 1 in Hungary

- Students in Business
- Entrepreneurship Course
- Main project task: develop start-up companies and create business plans for their ventures

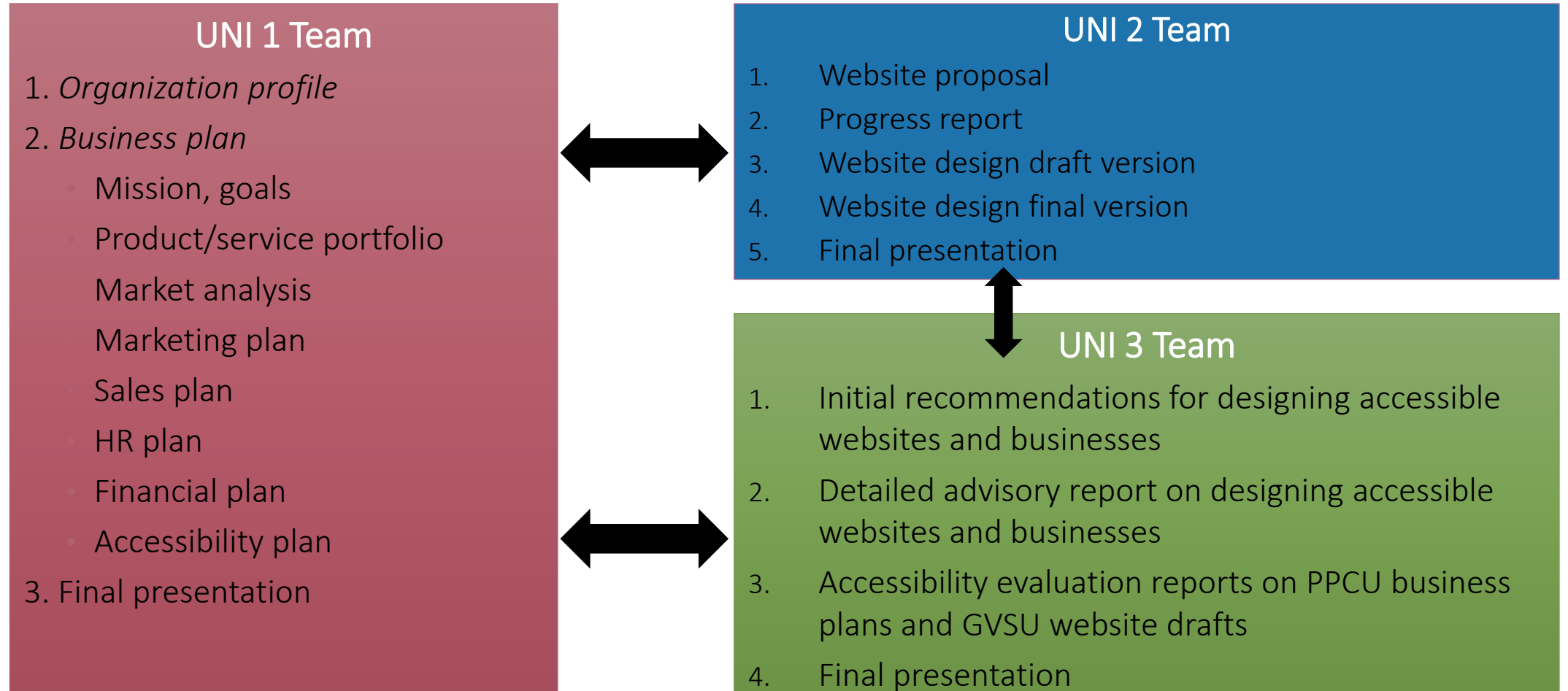
Students at University 2 in Michigan US

- Information Technology and Writing Majors
- Introduction to Professional Writing Course/Writing for the Web
- Main project task: design websites for the planned businesses

Students at University 3 in Washington US

- Information Technology and Human-Centered Design Majors
- Technical Communication
- Main project task: advising on how to make the proposed businesses and websites accessible to users with disabilities

Project design



Communication between the teams: LMS, Emails, Zoom, (FB/WhatsApp)
Collaborative work: LMS, GoogleDocs, Canva/Genial.ly/Prezi, Doodle, Wordpress

Project timeline

Timeline Project duration	UNI 1	UNI 2	UNI 3
Pre-project preparation	Learn about start-ups, business planning; Form teams and brainstorm start-up ideas	Learn about website design including content, style, accessibility; Form teams	Learn about basic accessibility theories, guidelines and issues; Form teams
	Form project groups (3 teams make up a project group)		
Week 1	Introductions, ice-breakers	Introductions, ice-breakers	Introductions, ice-breakers
Weeks 2-3	Videoconference on Zoom (present project idea, website requirements and discuss accessibility guidelines); Start-up company profile	Videoconference on Zoom (present project idea, website requirements and discuss accessibility guidelines) Web design questionnaire on user personas	Videoconference on Zoom (present project idea, website requirements and discuss accessibility guidelines) General accessibility guidelines
Weeks 4-5	Teams work on their business plans	Teams work on their website planning	Teams work on accessibility guidelines
Week 6	Feedback and updates	Feedback and updates	Feedback and updates
Week 7	Finalize business plan	Share draft website	Share draft accessibility report
Week 8	Share final business plan Presentations	Share final website Presentations	Share final accessibility report Presentations

Benefits

Students' positive attitude, high motivation

Ability to explain ideas, clarify concepts and negotiate solutions

Excercise creativity

Students' mindset to plan inclusive businesses

Learn about assistive technologies and solutions

Awareness of accessibility in their own professional field

International experience

Intercultural collaboration

Interdisciplinary project experience

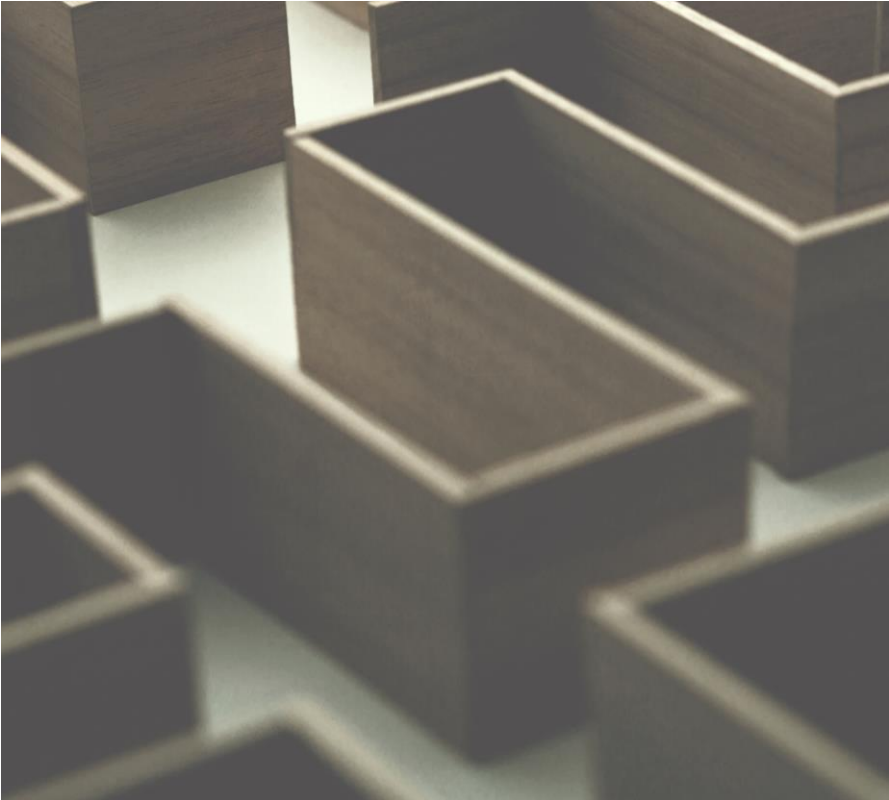
Employability skills development

Transversal competence development

Engage in global teamwork



Challenges



Technical issues

Working across timezones

Students dropping out of the programme/course

Various levels of motivation

Group dynamics

Language barriers, miscommunication

Tracking student's work, assessment

What to consider?

- Students to be involved
- Aims and learning goals of the VE project
- Broad content of the VE project
- Course(s) to host the VE project
- Instructors involved in VE design and/or VE implementation
- Length of the VE project (weeks of the semester) – semester alignment!
- Scheduling of the VE project design and implementation
- Task sequence, assignments and deliverables
- Assessment



UNICollaboration: Cross-Disciplinary Organisation for Telecollaboration and Virtual Exchange in Higher Education



For more information, resources and ideas go to **Unicollaboration.org**

Virtual Exchange Partner Finding Tool

News

- ➡ Webinar on Coloniality in Virtual Exchange – Voices from Palestine and Lebanon on Friday 17th May 14h–15h CEST online
- ➡ Online Partnering Fair on June 14th 2024 @ 14.30–16h CET
Register here: <https://forms.gle/h4QXpd7a2DrbRg4B7>

Journal of Virtual Exchange

Training and workshops for Higher Education Institutions

Resources (task bank, sample projects and many more)

Recognition of Virtual Exchange – UNICollaboration recognition badges